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(U) One thing to be decided in the earliest stages of the program was where to base and test the aircraft. Lockheed clearly could not do the business at Burbank, where the aircraft were being built, if for no other reason that its runway was too short. The ideal location ought to be remote from metropolitan areas; well away from civil and military airways to preclude observation; easily accessible by air; blessed with good weather the year round; capable of accommodating large numbers of personnel; equipped with fuel storage facilities; fairly close to an Air Force installation; and, possessing at least an 8,000 foot runway. There was no such place to be found.

(S) Ten Air Force bases programmed for closure were considered, but none provided the necessary security, and annual operating costs at most of them would be unacceptable. Edwards Air Force Base in California seemed a more likely candidate, but in the end it also was passed over. Instead a secluded site in Nevada was finally picked. It was deficient in personnel accomodations and POL storage, and its long-unused runway was inadequate, but security was good, or could be made so, and a moderate construction program could provide sufficient facilities. Lockheed estimated what would be needed in such respects as monthly fuel consumption, hangars and shop space, housing for personnel, and runway specifications. Armed with the list of major requirements, Headquarters came up with a construction and engineering plan. And in case anyone became curious about what was going on at this remote spot, a cover story stated that the facilities were being prepared for certain radar studies, to be conducted by an engineering firm with support from the Air Force. The remote location was explained as necessary to reduce the effect of electronic interference from outside sources.

(S) Excellent as it may have been from the point of view of security, the site at first afforded few of the necessities and none of the amenities of life. It was far from any metropolitan center. Lockheed provided a C-47 shuttle service to its plant at Burbank, and a chartered D-18 (Lodestar) furnished transportation to Las Vegas. Daily commuting was out of the question, however, and the construction workers arriving during 1960 were billeted in surplus trailers. A new

water well was dug, and a few recreational facilities provided, but it was some time before accomodations became agreeable.

(S) Among the lesser snags, one existed because the laws of Nevada required the names of all contractor personnel staying in the state for more than 48 hours to be reported to state authorities. It was generally felt that to list all these names and identify the companies involved would be likely to give the whole show away. The Agency's General Counsel, however, discovered that Government employees were exempted from these requirements. Thenceforth all contractor personnel going to the site received appointments as Government consultants, and if questions were asked the reply could be that no one but government employees were at this site.

(C)Construction began in earnest in September 1960, and continued on a double-shift schedule until mid-1964. One of the most urgent tasks was to build the runway, which according to initial estimates of A-12 requirements must be 8,500 feet long. The existing asphalt runway was 5,000 feet long and incapable of supporting the weight of the A-12. The new one was built between 7 September and 15 November and involved pouring over 25,000 yards of concrete.

Another major problem was to provide some 500,000 gallons of PF-1 aircraft fuel per month. Neither storage facilities nor means of transporting fuel existed. After considering airlift, pipeline, and truck transport, it was decided that the last-named was the most economical, and could be made feasible by resurfacing no more than eighteen miles of highway leading into the base.

(C) Three surplus Navy hangars were obtained, dismantled, and erected on the north side of the base. Over 100 surplus Navy housing buildings were transported to the base and made ready for occupancy. By early 1962 a fuel tank farm was ready, with a capacity of 1,320,000 gallons. Warehousing and shop space was begun and repairs made to older buildings. All this, together with the many other facilities that had to be provided, took a long time to complete. Meanwhile, however, the really essential facilities were ready in time for the forecast delivery date of Aircraft No. 1 in August 1961.

(S) The facilities were ready, but the aircraft were not. Originally promised for delivery at the end of May 1961, the date first slipped to August, largely because of Lockheed's difficulties in procuring and fabricating titanium. ....

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